



ENGAGING THE TARGET COMMUNITY

All prospective tenants come from local service providers working through the Coordinated Entry System (CES) or local Continuum of Care (CoC) equivalent. Step Up and Shangri-La Industries will partner with the jurisdiction and local CoC providers to identify the target community and engage in strategies to inform them of the Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) opportunity and solicit their input into the design of the project. Additionally, we continuously solicit input from our current PSH tenants throughout the state representing the target population to improve the design of our future developments and improve upon current ones simultaneously. This is done through our Tenant Advisory Committee (TAC), which involves a designated tenant from each development that represents the community and provides continuous feedback on:

- Unit design, including layout, furnishings, and finishes
- Common areas, including amenity spaces
- Durability and ease
- The site and access to off-site amenities

The TAC feedback is incorporated into our design standards. When feasible, we amend operational properties to meet tenant suggestions. Further, we make efforts to engage local service providers early to solicit similar feedback based on their understanding of their population's regional needs.

Lived-Experience

Lived experience is an invaluable aspect of our service, leadership, planning, and decision-making in day-to-day operations and the design of our projects. When hiring professional staff – from the boardroom to our Property Managers and Supportive Services Case Managers – we prioritize those with lived experience, whether it be homelessness, substance abuse, mental health disorders, a Veteran, or member of the LGBTQIA+ community, among others. Further, Step Up's Board of Directors has two Step Up participants with lived experience. The Board reserves these positions as an essential voice in the organization's leadership. Leveraging lived experience aids in helping members recover, stabilize, and integrate into their communities and enables us to continuously improve the design and functionality of our developments.

ENGAGING THE SURROUNDING COMMUNITY

All of our team's Permanent Supportive Housing developments have involved community engagement. We understand that to be successful, above all else, we need to communicate with and engage communities effectively. We have honed in on the pain points, lessons learned, means of communication, and applicable participation of our community partners. We welcome and encourage the input and involvement of neighboring communities, organized community associations, and the City/County itself.

Our PSH communities are fortunate to have the support of residents that are incredibly supportive of solving homelessness. However, we often see shifting views when it comes to accepting supportive housing in their neighborhood. To address the questions, concerns, and fears residents share, we use messages and strategies that build on and reinforce each other and suit the unique characteristics of the specific community.

We have the added capacity of utilizing feedback and engaging current tenants of our PSH communities to provide input on future developments, both in design and operation. Having a large pool of individuals with lived-experience allows us to increase our knowledge of best practices in design and implementation.



Predevelopment

Because opposition can start at the earliest stages, our approach engages residents at the onset of the development. We seek partnerships with local community consultants and organizations that know the community the best to assist in the process. Simultaneously, we find supporters via local leaders, faith and community groups, businesses, and community-based service organizations. Alongside the City/County, we hold multiple small group meetings. Smaller individualized sessions have proven more successful than large forums. During these meetings, we present the development and focus on humanizing homelessness, emphasizing safety and stability, explaining supportive services and the benefits, and discussing the accountability of our team of service providers and property managers. We present case studies of past successful developments and residents themselves. Whenever possible, we have local leaders and groups speak to their support of the development. We solicit input and address questions and concerns during all meetings. We provide fact sheets or online forums to provide information about the development and a different place for the community to provide feedback. Above all else, we expect community members to have diverse opinions, concerns, and questions, and we listen, individualize responses, and respond with top-line effective messaging. Feedback from first-responders such as Police and the Fire Department provides critical insight into the needs of the people they encounter without homes.

Construction

During construction, we maintain an open line of communication with all adjacent occupied facilities and the community. Our contractor, SLC, will develop a comprehensive construction outreach plan that is implemented early and ensures potentially affected areas are aware of our dedication to upholding a high quality of life standard throughout construction. Meet and greets are hosted in the early stages of the project to explain logistics plans, work hours, delivery schedules, and address concerns. As the project progresses, the program expands to include print and digital media postings, signage, and public notices providing status updates, significant milestones, potential effects to daily operations, and mitigation measures. We establish a hotline to address questions, concerns, and comments. Key project staff maintain hotlines and receive prompt responses and remediation when applicable.

Operations

Our outreach and communication approach with the community does not end once construction is complete and tenants are in place. We understand that there are typically ongoing community questions and concerns during the first year of operation. We continue to offer support to ensure our development successfully fits into the neighborhood and uphold initial expectations. We work with each tenant to understand the value of being a good neighbor and successfully integrating into the community. We identify and implement strategies on engaging surrounding neighbors, creating opportunities for feedback, and identifying areas where resources can be shared.

As referrals are accepted through the CES, we engage with the local providers to process the referral and support the individuals in moving into their new home. This provides ongoing opportunities for engagement and feedback on the success of our PSH project and how we may improve. These efforts support our project's integration into the community and increase the support we receive from CBOs and neighbors. Generally, after a year in service, the development and occupants have stabilized and adjusted into the fabric of the community.